

Virginia Transportation Conference

October 18, 2004

**Transportation Systems Operations:
Putting Concepts into Practice**

**Traveler Information and The Role of the
Private Sector**

James R. Robinson

Traveler Information

- **More than a nicety**
- **Provides real transportation improvement**
- **Allows travelers to make better decisions – become part of the solution**
- **Reduces stress**
- **VDOT is committed to providing good traveler information**

VDOT Smart Travel Strategic Plan - 2001

- **VDOT will support private sector information service ventures**
- **VDOT will support private sector ventures that broadcast directly to in-vehicle devices**
- **VDOT will support private ventures designed to provide en-route guidance**

VDOT Smart Travel Strategic Plan – 2001 Vision

- **“A statewide network of public-private partnerships will be developed, resulting in a seamless statewide advanced traveler information system.”**

Why Partner with the Private Sector?

- **Private sector can respond more quickly to rapidly changing technology**
- **Private sector is better positioned to meet wide variety of customer needs**
- **Private sector can personalize services**
- **More flexible in many ways – not bound by public procurement laws**

Private Sector Roles

- **Contractor**
- **Partner**
- **Independent**
- **Some combination of above**

Early VDOT Experience

- **Partners in Motion – DC area**
- **Hampton Roads ATIS**
- **Video sharing – NOVA**
- **Cooperate with traffic reporting services**
- **Share video w/ media**
- **None in operation today except media**

What We Learned

- **Successful partnerships require more than public sector moral support**
- **Good data is hard to come by**
- **Consumer market is elusive/generally not there – yet**
- **Marketing is essential**
- **If VDOT wants to provide good traveler information, must be willing to pay for it – forever??**

Where VDOT is Today

- **Statewide 511 Virginia in 2005**
- **Data sharing**
- **Access to ROW**
- **Video sharing**
 - Internet – individuals, media, companies
 - Other public agencies
- **Revenue sharing**

Where Private Sector is Today

- **Focused almost exclusively on large urban areas**
- **Struggling financially**
- **Needs national market**
- **Good, comprehensive data is scarce and very expensive**

Where We are Going

- **VDOT is funding 511 but contract includes revenue sharing provision, provision for task orders**
- **511 is focused on “exception” data, will not compete with private sector**
- **Private sector will continue to provide personalized services - hopefully**
- **Network wide travel time data will be available soon**

Travel Time Data

- **Derived from probes – i.e. wireless phones**
- **Does not require access to ROW**
- **Owned and maintained by private sector**
- **VDOT can use for traffic management, performance measurement**
- **Private sector can use for personalized traveler services**

Travel Time Data

- **How can travel time data be used by public sector – VDOT creating new R&D program**
- **If VDOT gives travel time data away for free, private sector cannot compete**
- **Policy question: Who pays and for what?**
- **Brave new world – stay tuned**

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